

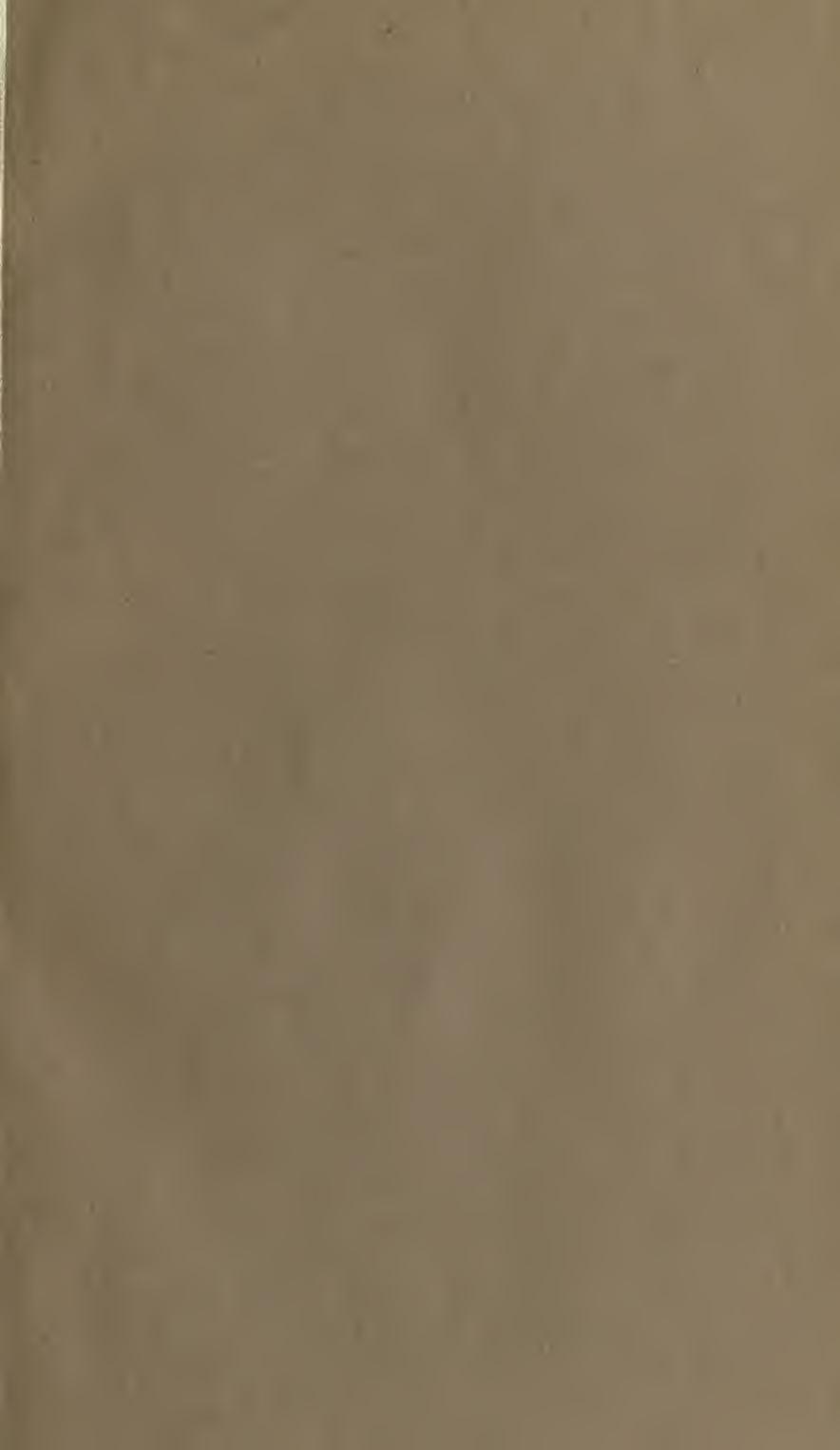
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and  
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Publication No. 5.



THE JEW IN  
THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF  
SOUTH AFRICA

By

Professor J. L. GRAY



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# THE JEW IN THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF SOUTH AFRICA



By Professor J. L. GRAY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

LARGE numbers of our fellow-citizens, especially among Afrikaans-speaking people, labour under a strong sense of grievance against Jewish South Africans, on the ground that the latter enjoy a disproportionately large share of economic rewards and privileges. They believe that there exists something like a Jewish monopoly of desirable and remunerative occupations, obstructing the legitimate attempts of other South Africans to obtain a footing on the higher rungs of the economic ladder.

According to this view, this state of affairs is comparatively recent. When the exodus from the platteland first began, it was the English trade union monopoly which prevented Afrikaners from becoming skilled industrial workers. They could still enter the professions. Later, however, when the effects of improved education and the Apprenticeship Acts had made it easier for Afrikaans-speaking youths to qualify as skilled artisans, the problem changed. Seeking to force an entry into commerce and the distributive trades, Afrikaners and English alike found the way blocked by the Jews. Even the professions were becoming increasingly Jewish, especially medicine and law. The Jews, accused of isolating themselves within the community as a separate entity, are said to be indifferent or even hostile to the aspirations of Afrikanerdom. They are thus: "the group that stands in the way of the Afrikaner's economic well-being."

Shorn of its rhetoric, such is the argument employed by the more responsible theorists of South African anti-semitism. It calls for an immediate reply from those who are convinced that anti-semitism, whether argued on economic grounds or otherwise, is a gigantic and dangerous superstition. Recently bodies like the Society of Jews and Christians were accused of wishing "to leave existing conditions untouched and undiscussed as proof of Christian love." If this were actually the case, their critics would be right in claiming that it would have the effect of preventing Afrikaners from progressing in the economic field. But it is not the case. Grievances exist and must be remedied.

However, we must be sure of the real nature of the existing conditions which hinder the economic welfare of poorer South Africans. Economic grievances in this and a great many other countries are real and serious. But are they the result of the machinations of Jews? In this paper I propose to examine the part played by the Jews in the economic life of South Africa and to indicate the real nature of the obstacles to the economic aspirations of the poorer classes. I profoundly sympathise with the desire of Afrikaners to better themselves and to obtain a higher measure of social welfare. If adjustments have to be made which are to the advantage of the poorer sections of the nation, I shall be the first to press them on governments and on the Jewish community. I refuse, however, to consider the South African nation in terms of the superior claims of any single linguistic or cultural group within it. I refuse also to take a one-sided view of economic welfare or to exalt economic welfare above other and equally valuable elements in the development of civilisation.

## II. JEWS AND THE CONSUMER

In assessing the part played by Jews in the economic life of the country, it is vital to remember that citizens have economic interests as consumers as well as producers. To enjoy a good standard of living, we must be able to spend our incomes to the best possible advantage. It is possible to imagine a state of affairs where everybody is employed, but the goods and services we



require for the kind of life we want to lead are extremely difficult to obtain. Such is the case in Germany to-day. Work has its own justification as providing models for valuable forms of social co-operation, but its main goal is to serve the needs of individuals and families as consumers. I begin by asking, therefore, whether the Jews promote or hinder our interests as consumers of things which are necessary or useful to man's body or spirit.

Citizens have an interest, as consumers, in obtaining things of the kind they want, in the quantity and quality they want, where and when it is most convenient to them, at prices which are reasonable when we know the necessary costs of production, distribution and expected profit.

Now, under present economic conditions, the interests of consumers are protected by competition and injured by restrictions on output and price imposed by producers. Competition tends to keep prices and profits at a reasonable minimum and to increase the ease with which we can obtain things when and where we want them. Sometimes it may lead to unemployment, ruin for producers and interference with consumers' supplies. Sometimes a monopoly (as of city transport, water and electricity) may yield a better service at a cheaper price. But in a profit-making system the interests of consumers, as a rule, are best met by competition.

It is undeniable that Jews have played a great part as middlemen and traders in bringing goods to formerly inaccessible regions and in keeping prices cheap. In linking the countryside with the towns, in making available goods formerly unobtainable, in widening the area from which foreign articles are imported, they have enormously improved the variety and quality of their services to consumers. As manufacturers and providers of services Jews in South Africa have in the vast majority of cases upheld competition and rejected monopolistic practices. In this respect they compare very favourably with non-Jewish business men. Restriction of competition in the interest of producing groups, involving increased prices to the consumer, arbitrary interference with his supplies and high taxation, exists primarily among agricultural products. Whatever we may think of the objects of the various

marketing schemes and State-promoted, farmer-controlled agencies to assist agriculture, few will claim that they put the interests of consumers first and that they are the work of Jews.

### III. NON-JEWISH MONOPOLIES

There is a partial monopoly in the wholesale distribution of fish, but it is not a Jewish concern that controls it. The Railway Administration, a government monopoly of the most thorough-going kind, effectively impedes the growth of cheap motor transport, but it is not controlled by Jews. Many of our municipalities use the monopoly profits of water and electricity services, largely paid for by the poor, to relieve the rates of property-owners of a much more prosperous class; but our city governments are not controlled by Jews. The land companies that force up the price of land, both urban and rural, and benefit from improved values created by general economic progress, are partly Jewish, partly non-Jewish. The price rings that force up the prices of articles used by builders and contractors, provincial and local price agreements that restrict competitive trading in almost every branch of retail trade, e.g., the Transvaal Coal-owners' Association, government awards that by fixing wages lead to increased prices, — none of these practices are in the slightest degree characteristic of Jews. Indeed, the only virtual monopoly controlled by Jews is that of theatrical and cinematic entertainment. Often an exaggerated degree of influence is attributed to the Schlesinger-controlled chain of newspapers. This chain has to compete with many powerful and well-established newspapers, both Afrikaans and English. In this country we are still very far from the position of Great Britain, whose popular Press is largely in the hands of trusts which are completely non-Jewish. The bazaars and chain-stores promoted by Jewish enterprise have their counterpart in many other countries where they are not owned by Jews. They are not monopolies and beyond a shadow of doubt have cheapened the cost of commodities to the consumer. If they injure other shopkeepers, it is more likely than not that they injure Jewish businesses.

#### IV. THE JEWS AND SOUTH AFRICAN FINANCE

With monotonous repetition Jews are accused of controlling the finance and banking of the countries they live in. In respect of South Africa such an allegation is ridiculous. The two chief banks conducting international transactions are English or English South African. No discount business or loan flotation is done by Jews. There are no Jewish deposit banks whatever, and in 1926 there was only one Jewish bank official of any kind out of 509. Only one small insurance company is controlled by Jews. In the financing of industry, investment companies are all-important. The vast majority of them have very few Jewish directors. On the other hand, there are no doubt many Jewish free-lance financiers or ad hoc financial syndicates. Considering the stakes held by Jews in commerce and secondary industry, they are probably not over-represented in South African business finance.

It is often mistakenly said that stock-brokers, of whom a quarter are Jews, are necessarily financiers. This is not so. Members of the Stock Exchange are professional agents, buying and selling shares for their clients on a commission basis. They are powerless to control the bigger movements of stock prices. Attached to stock markets everywhere, there are unproductive, parasitic speculators. Many are non-Jewish, many are Jews. They are enabled to wax rich (or go bankrupt) because of the speculative fever of South Africans of all sections. They are an inevitable result of any economic system in which property-rights are used to gamble with, irrespective of social morality.

In popular controversy, undue prominence is given to the part played by South African Jews in high finance through the activities of what is known as the Schlesinger group of companies. In a dynamic capitalist system, persons appear from time to time who build up great aggregations of business of many different sorts, linked together in a complicated fashion, and involving, at least temporarily, a vast financial imperium in imperio. Some are successful, some split up on the death of their promoter, some



end in disaster. Whether they are always safe from the point of view of the investing public or not, whether they are socially desirable or not, it is not my present purpose to discuss. The significant fact about them is that hardly any of their presiding geniuses have been Jews. It is therefore by no means extravagant to say that Mr. Schlesinger is only by accident a Jew. Whether now or in the future, it is extremely likely that a similar concern would have sprung up and the odds would be against it being initiated by a Jew. Those who defend or criticise the Schlesinger group should defend or criticise it as a type of economic structure, which capitalism everywhere encourages to appear, not as an example of business enterprise specifically Jewish.

Thus when it is a question of spending our incomes advantageously, it is plain that the citizens of South Africa have little or no reason to complain specifically of the Jews. They have added enormously to the economic development of the country, in mining, engineering and secondary industry. They are remarkably seldom involved in schemes to raise prices to the consumer. By thus fostering a large demand for goods, they have encouraged domestic manufactures and opportunities of employment and provided a great many incomes of the kinds which the State selects for taxation.

This is not a panegyric upon the Jews, as Jews. I am simply drawing attention to the activities of a group of business men whom public opinion — or part of it — elects to distinguish from other groups of business men. I am comparing their achievements with those of others by reference to criteria accepted by most South Africans of all sections. But anti-semitic feeling, especially among the poorer classes, is often accompanied by a good deal of anti-capitalist agitation. If we are anti-capitalist, we should logically be Socialist or Communist, since these movements alone offer a plausible constructive alternative form of society. Now Socialists and Communists are never anti-semites, because they recognise that capitalism is a type of organisation independent of race or religion and characteristic of all communities undergoing rapid economic evolution. Therefore, if we object to for-

tunes arising from industry and trade, we are objecting not to Jews as Jews or to non-Jews as non-Jews, but to all of them in their common capacity as capitalists, employers and investors, who support and disproportionately benefit from a system producing for profit and not for use.

## V. TOO MANY JEWS?

Citizens have a second economic interest, namely, in the manner in which they earn a livelihood, or in their occupations. Our occupations not only yield our incomes as consumers, but help to decide our social status and our ability to promote good government and improvements in the quality of living. There is little doubt that Jews in South Africa are on the average better off than Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, perhaps even than English-speaking South Africans. They have a smaller proportion of very poor and fairly poor, and a higher proportion of prosperous and very rich. (This is by no means true of Jews in Poland or Roumania and much less true of Jews in the U.S.A. and Great Britain.) On analysis we find that Jews are highly specialised, being especially numerous in commerce, certain manufacturing industries, certain professions, and in the entertainment world — a state of affairs existing also in a great many other countries.

In what circumstances is disproportion of this kind undesirable? Numerical assymetry in the economic life of a heterogeneous population is universal and inevitable. I do not find South African anti-semites objecting to the fact that non-Europeans are disproportionately employed as hewers of wood and drawers of water and that there are too few of them in government, the church, the army and the professions. Moreover, we are well aware that specialisation on a basis of comparative ability provides the best guarantee of maximum economic welfare and acts as a constant stimulus to inventiveness and progress. Many influential Afrikaans-speaking South Africans extol the cultural value of a harmony of culture-differences. If we select only the best in each culture, then a multiplicity of cultures

(provided it is politically workable) seems to ensure the richest spiritual development of the community. In the same way, nothing can justify us in wantonly upsetting a division of economic labour that appears to increase economic welfare.

However, there are several ways in which any existing occupational distribution may be economically and ethically defective. First, it may be difficult to justify in terms of what we know concerning the comparative fitness of different groups for the specialised occupations they fill or do not fill. In other words, it may be that the Jews are not on the average, or in a substantial minority of cases, well qualified for the occupations in which we find them, compared with other people. Thus economic welfare would be increased by some change. I do not know how those who defend capitalism can assert this of the Jews, for the capitalist test of economic fitness is economic success. In the ideal capitalist system the free choices of consumers, together with competition among producers or sellers, will determine that only those survive and prosper who produce or sell the goods and services most desired on terms most satisfactory to consumers. We have already shown that the Jews are not monopolists. Therefore, their economic success is well deserved. Critics of capitalism may reply that consumers' choices are largely determined by the power of wealth, both in causing the less urgent choices of wealthier consumers to be satisfied before the more urgent needs of poorer consumers, and through advertising devices, in making us buy what powerful sellers want us to buy. As I have pointed out, such criticisms apply not only to Jews, but to all sections of capitalists.

Secondly, there is the possibility that original entry into certain occupations is made difficult for the poorer sections of the community, since opportunities of acquiring the minimum standards of education, training, capital and experience are very unequally divided. It is clear, for example, that Afrikaans-speaking people from the platteland could not become skilled artisans until they could speak the other official language, undergo an apprenticeship on favourable terms, afford to wait long years



before attaining maximum adult wage-rates and generally adapt themselves to urban and industrial conditions. To enter manufacturing industry or commerce, they require some capital and further experience of business methods, besides imponderables like personal influence and the ability to inspire business confidence. Nobody pretends that these things can be come by quickly; they certainly cannot be obtained by abusing the Jews. The State can supplement the energies and ambitions of a people by procuring equality of educational opportunity between rich and poor, town and country, and between different linguistic groups. It can also break down monopolistic practices like some of those adopted by English trade unions and employers in restricting apprentices. It could even advance capital to suitable persons, if there were reason to suspect the banks of undue lack of confidence in Afrikaner borrowers. But the major inequalities of opportunity cannot be entirely removed in an economic system which defends and perpetuates gross disparities of income and wealth. I can see many good reasons why discontented Afrikaners should be Socialists, none why they should be Jew-baiters.

But there are specific allegations made against the Jews, accusing them of what amounts to monopolistic practices. It is said that they are so numerous and influential in certain occupations that they can effectively prevent others from entering them. It is further stated that they display a low standard of commercial morality and professional disinterestedness and are accustomed to act as a group to bring pressure to bear upon government and public opinion to maintain their privileges. The first charge is obviously the most important, since if the Jews were not numerically significant, their alleged malpractices could not amount to much. According to some, it is necessary to restrict by agreement or legislation the further expansion of Jews in commerce and the professions, to make room for an aspiring non-Jewish (and largely Afrikaner) population. It is politically intolerable, so the argument runs, that the great majority should be so little represented in certain remunerative and highly-esteemed occupations.

With the general form of the argument, if it were accompanied by a constructive criticism of defective social arrangements in capitalist South Africa, I am in complete agreement. But what steps can we take to correct the admitted evils of the general economic situation? Before we can answer this question, we must know the magnitude of the problem. What are the ascertained facts?

## VI. JEWS AND THE PROFESSIONS

First, consider the professions. There are conspicuously few Jews in university and school-teaching, in accountancy, engineering and technology, the public and municipal service and among the commissioned officers of the regular armed forces. In other words, the religion, culture, education, technology, defence and administration of South Africa are almost entirely in the hands of non-Jewish citizens and very largely in those of Afrikaans-speaking citizens. Doctors and lawyers on the other hand, show a relatively high proportion of Jews. These two professions, while not nearly so numerous, yield, no doubt, larger money incomes than the church, education, civil service or armed forces, although it must be recalled that there are a growing number of high-salaried positions in the public and municipal service and that engineering and accountancy are often very remunerative professions.

The Census of 1926 (the last for which we have such data) gives information about the proportion of occupied persons of different parentage in the six principal towns, from which estimates can sometimes be made for the Union as a whole. Jews were in excess of their "quota" in the total population (4.3%) in seven professional occupations employing 12,432 males and were less than their "quota" in nine professional occupations employing 18,182 males. They were in excess in law (both branches), medicine, dentistry, school-teaching (probably an over-estimate), authorship and journalism, and the group the Census calls "miscellaneous." They were below their "quota" in engineering, architecture, science and chemistry, accountancy, art, among poli-

tical and industrial officials, civil servants, municipal servants and police (higher ranks). Had there been a "quota" system in operation in the professions in 1926, 55 Jews would have been displaced, together with a much larger number of English-speaking people from most of the professions and a very large number of Afrikaners from the public service. Quotas are double-edged weapons.\*

The facts do not show any Jewish "monopoly" in the professions. Still, it may be argued that it is desirable to have more non-Jewish (and especially Afrikaans-speaking) doctors and lawyers. No obstructions of any kind are placed by those two professions (which are far from being controlled by Jews) to the entrance of non-Jews. They are open to all who have the necessary qualifications. If Afrikaners are still without these, it is because a great many of them are not well-off and because in the past they have preferred to make their sons farmers or ministers or public servants. The remedy is free or assisted higher education (including university) to all able to profit by it, if necessary with subsistence allowances, so that an able child of the poorer classes should have an equal chance with an able child of more prosperous parents. Probably, too, a reduction in the amount of certain professional licences and entry fees is required.

In law and medicine, unlike the salaried professions, duly-admitted practitioners for the most part have to find their own clients. No upper limit is fixed to the total number of doctors or lawyers, no competitive examination determines appointment or non-appointment. When more non-Jews qualify as doctors,

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\* Until the occupational volume of the 1936 Census is published, which may not be earlier than 1940, we cannot know what changes occurred between 1926 and 1936. It is generally believed that there is to-day an even higher proportion of Jews in certain professions, e.g., medicine. But the order of magnitude of the figures quoted here cannot have changed substantially. The same applies to the distribution of Jews in commerce and industry. Jewish immigration from Central and Eastern Europe, about which so much fuss has been made in certain quarters, was negligible compared with the number of Jews already domiciled in the Union.



they will have no difficulty in getting on in their profession, for 95% of the white population is non-Jewish, and hospital and other appointments are likely to go to them. The legal profession is in a slightly different case. A large part of the work of attorneys and solicitors arises from property disputes, and Jews hold much property. Many Jewish attorneys will continue to flourish and they will more often than not brief Jewish advocates. I cannot regard this practice as specially reprehensible. It is followed everywhere by the Scots, the Irish and even the English, and actively enjoined upon Nationalist Afrikaners. Still, it can be unwise. It would probably be politically prudent for litigants in choosing their lawyers to look about for the best man irrespective of his "race" and to bear in mind that there has always been a large number of brilliant Afrikaans-speaking lawyers in commercial practice as well as on the bench.

It is further argued that preference should be given to certain sections of non-Jews, apparently without regard to comparative ability, on the ground of "national" interest. That "foreign elements" are harmful to South African national life and culture is a short-sighted and dangerous doctrine. Without "foreign elements" no culture can transcend stagnation or barbarism. Nothing but an appropriate standard of competence can justify professional appointments, a principle which in the case of the public service, where the State is the employer, involves open competition. Race or language, as such, cannot constitute any claim to employment, unless we are willing to sacrifice efficiency and open the door to corruption on an unprecedented scale.

## VII. JEWS IN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Perhaps the greatest grievance of the anti-semites is against the Jewish predominance in commerce and their big share in secondary industry. Before we discuss what is to be done, we must remind ourselves of the facts. In the mining industry, Jews have a very small share of control and almost no participation in management or technical employment. South Africa's

next important industry is farming, in which the Jews are negligible. They have very little say in transport (e.g., railways), very little in heavy industry (none in Iscor), and only a small share in newspapers. Some of them have engineering works, more have factories, most are wholesalers and retailers. To speak of a Jewish stranglehold over our business life is utter nonsense. What Jews have is a very extensive share of commerce and allied occupations only.

Again, what were the facts in 1926? Confining ourselves to the six principal towns, in which most of the Jews live, we find that they constituted 8.5% of the urban white population. In mining, they constituted 0.7% of all Europeans engaged; all manufacturing industries 5.7%; transport and communication 1.5%; clerical occupations 7.3%; personal service 1.3%; entertainment and sport 20.8%; "others" 4.6%; commerce 32.6%; finance and insurance 14.2%.

Of course, we cannot take all these figures at their face value. It may be that Jewish employers are big employers of non-Jewish labour and are very wealthy, or the contrary may be the case. But the Census does not tell us. "Entertainment and sport" employ a large number of poorly-paid employees. In "finance and insurance" the figures are inflated by the group of auctioneers, etc., and insurance agents which contains many Jews, while banking employed only one. We may safely conclude that of the wages and salaries disbursed by the gold-mining industry, very few went to Jews. In this country Jews are pre-eminently a "nation of shopkeepers."

The business ambitions of Afrikaners at present receive considerable outlet in other fields, e.g., mining, finance, building, transport, etc. Still, nobody will deny that further outlets, especially in commerce, are desirable. Where capital is required to set up a business, there must be reasonable facilities for non-Jews to borrow it. If the capital is sought from private sources, inevitably lenders will be slow to lend until they are convinced of the borrower's business ability. Since Afrikaners have rela-

tively little business experience to show, they will therefore be involved in a vicious circle. To break it, I would certainly be prepared to consider the creation of a State-controlled Industrial Bank, provided its management were sound.

With regard to opportunities of employment, a curious situation exists. On the one hand, it is often asserted that Jewish employers give jobs to Jews but not to others. (Much the same complaint is made by Afrikaners against English South Africans and by the latter against Afrikaners.) On the other hand, many have the grievance that too many Afrikaners are employed by Jews, e.g., in the distributive trades, and too few by their fellow-Afrikaners! Sometimes even Jews accuse their fellow-Jews of unwillingness to employ their own people. Both statements cannot be wholly true, yet both may be true in part. There are clearly too few Afrikaner businesses to enable Afrikaner workers in commerce and industry to be employed by people of their own group, even if this were one of their burning ambitions. It is highly inconsistent for those who wish such racial discrimination to object to Jews doing the same thing, if Jews generally do the same thing, which is in no sense proved.

Only in a thoroughly homogeneous country is no discrimination practised on grounds of language, culture, religion or race. South Africa is not such a country. In fact, few people genuinely interested in the free development of civilisation admire the postulated homogeneity of either Rousseau's democratic State or the Nazi totalitarian State. Aspirations towards uniformity, either democratic or totalitarian, must always be tempered by the consideration that a measure of variety enriches both the economic and the spiritual potentialities of a nation.

But such variety has its price. While groups and minorities persist, there will always be a tendency for people to feel more at home with their fellow-members of the same group than with members of others. This will especially be the case when minorities are persecuted, as Jews so often are. In this matter, Jews and non-Jews both have duties towards one another, arising from



their greater obligation, fully acknowledged by Jews, to the wider national community of which all are members. On the one hand, Jews must strive to promote the employment of non-Jews and to assist them to acquire the necessary qualifications. On the other hand, non-Jews must exert themselves to qualify for a greater variety of jobs and to strive to break down the exclusiveness forced upon Jews through their long and tragic experience of Gentile persecution. One way of doing this would be to remove the barriers that prevent Jews from making headway in certain fields, e.g., the mining industry and the public service.

But we cannot open closed doors by decree to unqualified people. As economists have convincingly shown, such interference with private property rights usually increases economic chaos and distress by weakening the present basis of economic incentive and organisation. Any forcible interference with the right of individuals to give employment to whom they choose, provided always that their choice extends among all qualified persons, logically involves one of two things, either a Socialist régime in industry which would certainly not proceed on a basis of racial discrimination or a totalitarian, regimented, semi-servile State.

## VIII. JEWS AND COMMERCIAL MORALITY

We have still to deal with two further charges, namely, that Jews observe a low standard of commercial morality and professional disinterestedness, and that they attempt to use their wealth and influence to buttress up their present privileged position. The truth or falsity of these charges is not an easy matter to investigate. Where no legal offence has occurred, it is remarkably difficult to assess the morality of conduct of which we do not approve or which appears as injurious to our interests. There is no good reason for believing that Jews are disproportionately guilty of legal offences concerning property, but the matter has never been statistically investigated. There is a widespread conviction that many Jews are bad or sweating employers and are guilty of "sharp" trade practices, involving either their workmen

or the consumer. But many who are not Jews are equally prone to commercial immorality. If in certain industries or trades competitive conditions tempt employers to exploit their workpeople or act insincerely by their customers, the State should intervene and regulate or prohibit such trades. An industry which can only survive if it sweats its employees has no right to existence. Trade practices, like certain forms of hire-purchase agreements, which may often operate harshly on consumers, should equally be regulated or prohibited.

Further, if we find that Jews are disproportionately numerous in sweated industries, we ought to understand the reasons why they have selected them. They select them not because they are as a group prone to sweating — indeed, they have a reputation for lavish charity and generous patronage of the arts and sciences — but because they are forced to be economic “voortrekkers,” seeking fresh ground where they can be free and often faced with hard choices. They are constantly subjected to the danger of being persecuted and victimised if they occupy positions of dependency on non-Jews. They constantly strive, therefore, to carve out for themselves positions, however humble, where they are their own masters. This desire for independence, based on fear of victimisation, sufficiently explains the ambitions of Jews to seek those professions where they are not salaried employees and to start businesses of their own, even on small capitals; to pioneer new and struggling industries, where it is hard to be generous or even fair.

I am far from condoning such practices. All I wish to argue is that if Jews employ them it is not because of any original sin attaching specifically to Jews, not because, in any sense, they freely choose to employ them, but because their experiences at the hands of their Christian neighbours have left them with few other alternatives. But there are some other alternatives and we cannot adopt a negative policy in the matter, whether it involves Jews or others. If more Jews than non-Jews would suffer by the stricter enforcement of Factory Acts and anti-sweating legislation, they must suffer. Jews, like everybody else, must discourage their

people from engaging in anti-social occupations and try to settle them in others. (This, in fact, Jews are always striving to do, as witness the aims of the organisation known as the Ort). Jews must, like everybody else, recognise trade unionism and loyally obey the decision of Industrial Councils and Wage Boards. Jews must, like everybody else, work for improved social and industrial welfare. Jews must, like everybody else, refrain from exploiting native labour.

It is monstrous travesty of the facts to suggest that the resistance to Factory Acts, anti-sweating legislation, trade unionism, higher wages and industrial welfare generally, has come more from Jews than non-Jews. Why have the employing classes as a whole been so slow in promoting improvements in wages and working conditions for the working classes? It is because they conceived it to be against their economic interest to do so. During the early days of the Industrial Revolution in Britain and U.S.A. all were guilty of industrial crimes, irrespective of religion or race. So it is in South Africa. If Jews were conspicuously most guilty, why have their non-Jewish business competitors not improved their competitive position by invoking the law and public opinion to damage their rivals through legislative enactment? They have not done so, which makes it extremely doubtful whether there is any truth in the charges that Jews are worse employers on the average than non-Jews. Bad employment conditions are a symptom predominantly of the selfish and anti-social nature of capitalist profit-making production, which have Jewish as well as Gentile critics and Jewish as well as Gentile defenders.

## IX. THE SECURITY OF JEWS

It is often asserted that Jews are seldom disinterested in the work they do in the professions and in public life. Disinterestedness is a difficult concept to define. What we do know is that it comes more easily to those who feel confident and secure. We may readily admit that members of a persecuted minority have frequent occasion to make certain of their security, which may



lead them to flatter, pretend and deceive. Such conduct is also typical of unhappy children and neurotics. It characterises much of the behaviour of oppressed national groups striving for freedom. No doubt many Jews, like many non-Jews, display behaviour of this sort. Many Scotsmen, many Afrikaners, many Indians in British India do so. It is deplorable but not a specifically Jewish trait. The fault lies with those who drive them to it, as we now recognise in the treatment of children and neurotics

We need not spend any time in discussing the charge that Jewish influence is illegitimately employed on government and public opinion. All groups forcibly isolated or persecuted will naturally defend themselves to the best of their ability. Groups not placed on the defensive will also try to influence government and public opinion to promote their interests. This is an inevitable process of politics in countries with even a modicum of freedom. Looked at in the light of the working of democracy, it is a process productive of good. The only point at issue is whether Jews seek to promote their interests illegitimately. Do they corrupt the legislature or the judiciary? Have they a monopoly of means of forcing public opinion? Nobody has produced a shred of evidence that such is the case in South Africa. If objection is taken to the power of wealth in politics, let the objection be put generally, as Socialists put it. It is absurd to single out the Jews.

## X. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is well to remind ourselves that there is quite as high a proportion of Jews who are South Africans as of any other section of the Union's citizens. Most have been born here, few have any other country to look to. If there are faults in our economic system — and there are many shameful things in it — let all sections work together to remove them. In all quarters there are men of good-will and intelligence. In all quarters there are men caught up in the net of poverty, exploitation and economic serfdom. Those who are genuinely interested

in removing wrongs will not be persuaded to interfere with our economic structure on racist grounds. They will join with like-minded men and women of all sections to fight the common enemy, which is the power of money, the disregard of common humanity and the cruelty shown by one race, colour or creed against another.

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\*The Rev. Fr. C. H. S. Runge, C.R.

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